AfterMath

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Find us on the web at http://www.tamu-commerce.edu/coas/math

Whoever despises the high wisdom of mathematics nourishes himself on delusion and will never still the sophistic sciences whose only product is an eternal uproar. Leonardo da Vinci

Goodbye and Hello: Faculty in Transition

Over this past summer, a modicum of faculty flux transpired. Three faculty members who were with us last academic year have moved on to other jobs and responsibilities: Dr. Eric Aurand has moved to Eastfield College in Mesquite, Dr. Nancy Livingston resigned citing family matters, and Ahmed Rashed is finishing up his doctorate at UNT.

We welcome the following new faculty members to the department:

Assistant Professor **Eileen Faulkenberry** comes to us from Oklahoma State University with research interests in mathematics education. Eileen wrote her doctoral dissertation on preservice secondary school teachers' knowledge of process, content, and pedagogy in the actual high school mathematics that they may soon be teaching, with some surprising observations. Work such as this can only help improve our own teacher preparation program. Dr. Faulkenberry received her undergraduate mathematics degree *summa cum laude* from Henderson State University (where her father was department chair).

Ad interim Assistant Professor **Dr. Charles Dorsett** comes to us most recently from Louisiana Tech. Dr. Dorsett was a full professor there until his retirement, after which he and his wife wanted to return to Texas – in fact, Dr. Dorsett was friends with Stuart Anderson back when both were seeking graduate degrees at the University of North Texas in the 1970s. Dr. Dorsett's mathematical area of interest is point set topology; he has over 75 publications (!) in that area. He comments "Getting to teach at A&M-Commerce within the Department and living in Commerce has made his return to the state very delightful." He will continue his research efforts in point-set topology.

Ad interim Assistant Professor **Dr. Hasan Coskun** recently completed his PhD at Texas A&M in combinatorics/number theory, working on multi-dimensional analogues of the Rogers-Ramanujan identities. (More precisely, his research interests include multiple basic hypergeometric series of symmetric function argument and multiple q-series identities associated to root systems, multivariable symmetric rational and biorthogonal rational functions, and multivariate interpolation on the space of symmetric functions.) He is also interested in mathematics education at both the high school and college level. He is originally from Turkey, and thus his native language is Turkish. Hasan is married and has two children. Personal interests include writing articles for certain newspapers and journals on social, educational, and environmental issues. In addition, he writes "I am the last mathematician whose Anderson number and Kreminski number is 1. (Definition of X number: If Y is/was a faculty member while X is/was serving as the department head,then Y has X number 1.)" Surely this is something for the record books!

Ms. Sasha Wilson was hired in midyear as an *ad Interim* Instructor, and she continues in that capacity this year. Sasha received her undergraduate degree from A&M-Commerce, and Master's from SMU. She worked at Texas Instruments in the Educational and Productivity Solutions Division for three years and is doing some consulting for them currently. (She works on the automated testing of new operating systems for the CAS-based devices, e.g. the TI-89 and TI-92+ and Voyage 200.)

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Foundation and Scholarships News

The department continues to assist Janet Scott and Bill McAfee (class of 1936!) in hosting a regional Texas Math and Sciences Coaches Association math competition once a year, every January, on our campus. Net proceeds from the TMSCA event go directly into the William C. McAfee Mathematics Fund, which will be used to support department faculty in professional development projects. Scholarships, created from and sustained by generous contributions of alumni and other friends of the mathematics department, have benefited uncountably many mathematics students over the years. Current (Fall 2003) students now being supported are:

- Senior Ruta Vaclavik, the Cecil B Wright Scholarship
- First year student Sarah Muehlenbein, the Hoyle & Ann Oglesby Julian Scholarship
- Sophomore Steven Valkenaar, the W.W. "Bub" Taylor Mathematics Scholarship
- First year student Amy Davis, the Dale & Betty Bedgood Scholarship
- Senior Lucas Vaczlavik, the Rachel Lafferty Scholar Award

If you wish to make contributions to any of these funds, you may call the Department at 903.886.5157 or the A&M-Commerce Foundation at 903.886.5712

Goodbye and Hello . . .—*continued from page 1*

Other new faces in the department include graduate assistants **Aparna K.C.**, **Linda Rankin**, **Jennifer Kornell**, and **Carla McBroom**. (Continuing on include **John Denney**, **Raghu Manur**, and **Gopi Vudanrao**). Adjuncts with us this fall are **Lymeda Singleton** (coming to us from Abilene Christian University), **Laura Patton** (an alumna, who received her Master's at Baylor) and **Heather Burkham** (who was a graduate assistant last year, is finishing up her math master's degree, and is now a doctoral student in Secondary and Higher Education here in Commerce). **Hoyle Julian** continues to give his time to the department as a veteran adjunct. Anne Casey has taken a job as the science teacher for 5th-9th grade at the Phoenix School in Greenville, but she continues teaching some Extended University (correspondence classes) for us. **Sandra Johnson,** former instructor/adjunct is now teaching at a Community College in Bakersfield, California.

Last but not least… August 17 2003 was a day that the math department thought would never come: **Dr. Stuart Anderson** stepped down as Head. It is hard to imagine the department functioning without his leadership. Dr. Anderson had been hinting at his desire to return to full-time teaching for several years, and began referring to 'the next department head' more and more in conversation. Stuart had served in that capacity for 15 years, and as such had risen in status to elder-statesman department head. Stuart has confided that his return to full-time faculty status has been even more enjoyable than he had predicted. He continues as Secretary/Treasurer of the Texas Section of the MAA. And he's been toying with the idea of writing his own history of mathematics textbook. Despite the loss of Stuart as Head, the department continues to be well-managed by **Kay Hatfield**, who has a new department head to train: Rick Kreminski.

More faculty—related updates

Dr. Vanessa Huse is the recipient of a $180,000 Teacher Quality Grant (formerly known as Eisenhower Grants) from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and worked with **Dr. Karen Rhynard** on a teachers' manual for the new geometry supplement course Math 352. **Dr. Italo Simonelli** continues to be our most productive and prolific scholar: he's had many (at least two) publications since the last newsletter, completed many (at least two) manuscripts this past year, refereed at least one manuscript for a journal, and in his ample spare time is finishing up his 2nd book, this one in applications of probability to number theory, with Dr. Janos Galambos (Temple University). We are eager to hear him present his purported purely probabilistic proof of the Prime Number Theorem in the Student/Faculty Colloquium series this fall. His book is due out in 2004. **Dr. Vance Underhill** has announced that after 35 years of teaching, his retirement will become effective at the end of this academic year. Perhaps as a result of this announcement, **Dr. Bill Aslan** (who first arrived in Commerce in 1967) is beginning to think about retirement as something that may happen, some time in the future. There has been an innuendo or two from **John Davenport** about the same subject. Bill took over faculty sponsorship of the math clubs from **John Heath**, and has since passed sponsorship to **Pam Webster**. **Heidi Staebler** remains on leave at Illinois State University, where she is pursuing her doctorate in Mathematics Education. At a recent dinner hosted by Bill Aslan, several guests included **Howard Lambert**, **Archie Brock**, and **Dale Bedgood**. **Dr. Rick Kreminski** completed a year's tour of duty as Interim Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, but stepped aside upon the return of Dr. Finnie Murray as Dean after a year as Interim Provost. Dr. Kreminski's textbook *Applied Abstract Algebra* finally will be published by Johns Hopkins University Press in early spring 2004, and he is equally relieved that his Stieltjes constant paper (with its 25 fussy figures) finally appeared in *Mathematics of Computation* this past year.

Mathematics clubs and student highlights

The department will be instituting a new club some time this fall. Currently students and faculty may participate in the student Mathematical Association of America (MAA) Chapter, the honorary Pi Mu Epsilon society, and the Alpha Gamma Alpha math club. A membership drive was conducted for an additional mathematics teacher club, based in part on the growing cadre of students in the new 4-8 Middle School math certification program. Over 50 students supplied their names and contact information. This new group will likely be affiliated with the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. **Lucas Vaclavik** and **Jennifer Kornell** gave talks last April based on their research work; Jennifer spoke at the MAA meeting hosted by Sam Houston State University, and Lucas spoke at the 2nd annual Sigma Xi Student-Faculty Research Forum (winning first place honors). Jennifer spoke about her work in cryptography and C++, and Lucas spoke about his work in a distributed computing project.

Alumni updates

Frank Alexander received his Bachelor's in mathematics from East Texas State Teachers' College in 1954. (ETSTC changed to ETSC in 1957, then to ETSU in 1962.) He retired with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in 1974 from the US Air Force, after having received BSEE and MSEE degrees in the 1960s from the Air Force Institute of Technology. From 1975 to 1994 he was employed as an electrical engineer with Texas Instruments. He married Patsy Stubbs in 1954, and has two children, Steven and Thomas.

Jennifer Kornell graduated *summa cum laude* at the Spring 2003 commencement exercises. This was based on her 3.964 GPA (graduating 5th out of 167). Jennifer also graduated with Highest Honors, which was based on her successful defense of her Honors Thesis "An implementation of RSA using C++". Jennifer is now a graduate student in the department.

Catherine Brumit (B.S., 2003) reports that she is teaching Algebra I at Farmersville High School and says, "I love it, the kids are great!"

Alumni volunteers wanted!

We are seeking volunteers from the ranks of the mathematics alumni for a range of tasks. Here are three. (1) As Interim Dean, Dr. Kreminski came up with the idea for the first program, one he tentatively calls "Recent Alumni Mentoring Program" - RAMP. The idea is to pair recent alumni with first- or second-year college students. Who better to help guide a student who wants to teach high school math than someone who knows all the latest ins-and-outs, dos-and-donts, and myriad changes with regard to state regulations and testing? And a recent alumnus math/computer-science double major can help guide someone thinking about the same combination of majors. Recent alumni are working as actuaries – what advice do they have? (2) Next, we hope that some of those alumni who graduated some time ago and are more established in careers are now in a position to help sponsor business or professional internships for our current students. Can you help a student get a jumpstart on a satisfying career, through summer or part-time work – and help your company in the process? (3) Finally, we'd like to invite alumni back to Commerce, to give guest lectures to classes and/or the mathematics clubs. (Conversely, many of our faculty make classroom visits to area middle and high schools for guest presentations, something simultaneously both terrifying and enjoyable.) Interested in participating as an alumni volunteer? Please let us know, via email or a quick note.

Let Us Hear From You

We would like to hear from all of our former students. Whether you used slide rules or calculators in the classroom, attended ET or A&M-Commerce, we are interested in what has happened in your life since you left campus. If you have a story about a favorite professor, we would like to hear that too. Please fill out the form below and return it to the Math Department so your information can be included on the next *AfterMath Newsletter.*

Name: _____

Address (for our files): _____

_____

City, State & Zip: _____

Degree: _____ Year Graduated: _____

Please list any promotions, career changes, achievements, awards, or personal news that you would like to share: _____

_____

Interested in learning more about volunteer possibilities, such as RAMP, etc?

___ Sure, count me in! ___ Maybe later, not at this time.

Send to the address below, or via email to Richard_Kreminski@tamu-commerce.edu

Homecoming Breakfast

The seventeeth annual Mathematics Homecoming Student/Alumni Breakfast will be held at 9:00 a.m., Saturday, November 1, 2003 in the Bluebonnet room of the Sam Rayburn Memorial Student Center. Please send in your reservations by October 28, 2003. The cost is $7.50 per person.

Name: _____

Address (for our files): _____

_____

City, State & Zip: _____

Please reserve _____ places at the Homecoming Breakfast on November 1, 2003 @ $7.50 each.

Please return to:

Mathematics Department
Texas A&M University-Commerce
P.O. Box 3011
Commerce, TX 75429-3011
or via e-mail to Kay_Hatfield@tamu-commerce.edu

Department of Mathematics
Texas A&M University-Commerce
P.O. Box 3011
Commerce, TX 75429-3011

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